

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 031818

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S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

NEA/ARN - MR. BULLEN

NEA/ARP - MR. AHERNE

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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PAGE 02 STATE 031818

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR
FEBRUARY 9, 1976:

Q. REPORTS KEEP APPEARING IN THE NEW YORK TIMES
PARTICULARLY THAT A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE TO SUPPLY THE
EGYPTIANS WITH MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE LAST WORD WE HAD
FROM YOU IS THAT BEFORE ANY FINAL DECISION IS MADE CONGRESS
WOULD BE CONSULTED. CAN YOU BRING US UP TO DATE ANY
FURTHER?

A. JUST AS WE HAVE SAID IN THE PAST, NO FINAL DECISION HAS
BEEN TAKEN ON THIS GENERAL QUESTION.

Q. BUT AREN'T THE TIMES' REPORTS PRETTY MUCH ON THE MARK
AS THEY HAVE THE STATE OF PLAY NOW? THEY DON'T HAVE THE
FINAL DECISION BUT --

A. THERE ARE A LOT OF ASPECTS TO THAT STORY -- MORE THAN
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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 031818

THE QUESTION YOU JUST ASKED ME, I THINK.

Q. ARE YOU CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS NOW ABOUT THE
POSSIBILITY OF ARMS SALES?

A. I DON'T THINK THE DECISION HAS AS YET BEEN MADE, AND
BEFORE IT IS MADE THERE WILL BE CONSULTATIONS.

Q. WELL, WAIT A MINUTE -- WAIT A MINUTE. YOU ARE NOT NOW CONSULTING WITH CONGRESS, IS THAT CORRECT?

A. I AM NOT PREPARED TO ANSWER THAT PER SE. I DO NOT KNOW THAT THERE HAVE NOT BEEN SOME INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS. WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT WE WILL NOT MAKE ANY DECISION ON THIS WITHOUT FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q. WHEN YOU SAID "CONSULTATION," YOU MEAN IN FACT CONSULTATION THAT WOULD GIVE THEM A WEIGHT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS -- OR DO YOU MEAN NOTIFICATION, WHICH IS THE USUAL PROCEDURE?

A. NO, I MEAN CONSULTATION: THAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE A DECISION UNTIL WE HAVE HAD THE BENEFIT OF THE VIEWS OF THE CONGRESS.

Q. A NEW PROCEDURE?

A. I DO NOT THINK SO. THERE ARE LOTS OF INSTANCES IN WHICH WE HAVE CERTAINLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT CONGRESSIONAL VIEWS BEFORE MAKING A DECISION.

Q. WAS THIS POSSIBILITY, OR PROBABILITY -- OR WHATEVER -- DISCUSSED WHEN PRIME MINISTER RABIN WAS HERE? WAS IT DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER?

A. AS I HAVE SAID IN THE PAST, I AM NOT GOING TO GET DRAWN INTO DISCUSSING WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED OR NOT DISCUSSED WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN ON ANY SUBJECT.

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PAGE 04 STATE 031818

Q. IN THE PAST SEVERAL TIMES -- AND EVEN YETIDA WEECOME AGO -- YOU SAID THAT EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT SADAT DID NOT COME HERE WITH ANY WEAPONS REQUESTS. HE MADE NO REQUESTS WHEN HE WAS HERE. THE EGYPTIANS MADE NO REQUEST AT THAT TIME. AND I KEEP ASKING YOU IF YOU'RE GOING TO STICK TO THAT. ARE YOU STILL STICKING TO THAT?

A. I THINK THE QUESTION, AS I RECALL, TO WHICH WE HAVE BEEN RESPONDING IS: DID PRESIDENT SADAT BRING FORMAL SHOPPING LIST WITH HIM PER SE.

Q. I DON'T MEAN "FORMAL"; I MEAN --

A. I THINK PRESIDENT SADAT HAS SAID THAT HE DID NOT BRING A FORMAL SHOPPING LIST. HOWEVER, HE HAS BEEN ON

RECORD PUBLICLY, AND CERTAINLY IN PRIVATE TALKS WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, OF HIS DESIRE FOR AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT -- INCLUDING TYPES.

Q. EXCUSE ME. LET'S LEAVE THE WORD "FORMAL" OUT. WE HAVE USED THE COMMON PHRASE "SHOPPING LIST," A RATHER INFORMAL WORD, BY THE WAY. WOULD YOU STILL SAY THAT PRESIDENT SADAT DID NOT COME WITH A WEAPONS SHOPPING LIST?

A. YES, AND MY ANSWER --

Q. AND THAT HE DID NOT PRESENT A LIST: ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE SIX, SEVEN -- AND IT MAY HAVE SLIPPED OUT OF HIS MOUTH -- BUT IT DIDN'T ACTUALLY APPEAR IN THE PAPER?

A. NO, MY ANSWER IS THE ANSWER I JUST GAVE A FEW MINUTES AGO: PRESIDENT SADAT HAS INDICATED ON THE RECORD, PUBLICLY, THAT HE WAS INTERESTED IN OBTAINING MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

Q. YES.

A. AND HE HAS SPOKEN PRIVATELY WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ABOUT AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND HE HAS INCLUDED TYPES THAT HE IS INTERESTED IN.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 031818

Q. I'M ASKING YOU, DID HE INDICATE TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT HE WANTS WEAPONS -- NOT PUBLICLY -- TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

A. YES, HE HAS INDICATED THAT IN A GENERAL WAY. AND WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN ON THIS GENERAL SUBJECT -- THAT THE QUESTION OF THE TIMING AND CONTENT OF OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CONGRESS ON THIS SUBJECT IS UNDER STUDY. AND TODAY IT IS JUST PREMATURE FOR ME TO TRY TO GET INTO ANY MORE DETAILS THAN THIS OR TO BE ANY MORE SPECIFIC THAN THAT.

Q. COULD YOU JUST SAY WHAT IS EXACTLY UNDER STUDY?

A. THE QUESTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR EGYPT.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY THAT NO FINAL DECISION HAS BEEN MADE, YOU IMPLY THAT A PRELIMINARY DECISION HAS BEEN MADE. IS THAT TRUE?

A. NO, NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE.

Q. NEITHER FINAL NOR PRELIMINARY --

A. WE ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE ANY DECISION UNTIL WE HAVE HAD CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q. AND WHEN ASKED -- IF CONSULTATION HAD BEGUN -- YOU SAID, WHAT?

A. I TOLD JOHN THAT I AM NOT SURE THERE HADN'T BEEN SOME TALKS. I DO NOT KNOW OF THEM MYSELF. I HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED OF THEM SO I DO NOT WANT TO EXCLUDE THE FACT THAT SOMEBODY IN THE ADMINISTRATION MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT WITH THE CONGRESS IN AN INFORMAL WAY.

Q. DID YOU CONSULT WITH CONGRESS BEFORE YOU SOLD EGYPT THE JEEPS?

A. WHAT IS THE QUESTION?
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PAGE 06 STATE 031818

Q. I ASKED, DID THE ADMINISTRATION CONSULT WITH CONGRESS BEFORE IT SOLD JEEPS TO EGYPT?

A. WHAT TRANSACTION WAS THAT?

Q. THERE WAS A SALE OF JEEPS LAST SUMMER, AS I RECALL AND THE JEEPS LATER TURNED UP IN A NOVEMBER 5TH PARADE.

Q. AND THE THOUSAND (INAUDIBLE).

A. THOUSAND HEAVY TANKS?

Q. TRUCKS.

A. I WOULD LIKE TO CHECK INTO THOSE TRANSACTIONS. MY RECOLLECTION WAS THAT THOSE WERE ITEMS THAT WERE NOT ON ANY MUNITIONS CONTROL LIST, THAT THESE WERE COMMERCIAL VEHICLES. BUT I WOULD LIKE TO CHECK INTO THAT.

Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CONSULTING CONGRESS?

A. TO HAVE THEIR VIEWS BEFORE WE MAKE ANY DECISION.

Q. WELL, BY CONSULTING CONGRESS DO YOU MEAN SOMETHING MORE THAN COMPLYING WITH THE NELSON AMENDMENT?

Q. IS THERE A LEGAL REQUIREMENT, OR IS IT POLITICAL SENSIBILITIES OR WHAT?

A. I THINK THE ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF THE VIEWS OF THE CONGRESS BEFORE IT MAKES A DECISION.

Q. CAN THEY MAKE YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND?

A. I THINK THAT IS IMPLICIT IN THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD "CONSULTATION." THIS IS A SERIOUS AND SINCERE COMMITMENT.

Q. WHEN YOU SPEAK OF "CONSULTATION" YOU ARE TALKING OF SOMETHING BEYOND THE REQUIREMENT OF THE NELSON AMENDMENT?
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 031818

A. I AM SAYING THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE A DECISION UNTIL WE HAVE HAD FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE CONGRESS.

Q. WHO IS INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY OF THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR EGYPT RIGHT NOW IN THE ADMINISTRATION?

A. I CANNOT IDENTIFY OFFICIALS FOR YOU, BUT OBVIOUSLY PERSONS IN THE DEPARTMENT AND IN THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT -- NSC STAFF -- THE USUAL PEOPLE THAT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THIS KIND OF A PROPOSITION.

Q. WHEN DID THAT STUDY BEGIN?

A. I DO NOT HAVE THE DATE.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE BY YASSIR ARAFAT YESTERDAY THAT THE CIA IS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON?

A. THAT IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE.

THE U.S. HAS CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED AND ARGUED FOR NO FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND THAT THE LEBANESE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL SOLUTION. ARAFAT'S STATEMENT IS TOTALLY WRONG. INGERSOLL

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